Science Coordination Group
Meeting Summary – Meeting #3
John D. Campbell Agricultural Center
18710 S.W. 288th Street
Homestead, Florida
March 2, 2004

Attendance:

Calvin Arnold, USDA
John Benjamin, NPS
Ronnie Best, USGS
Joan Browder, NOAA/NMFS
Bob Doren, SFERTF
Kate Elliott, SFETF
David Erne, BAH
Jack Gentile
Ken Haddad, FWC
Greg Knecht, FDEP
Loren Mason, USACE
Greg May, SFERTF
Rafaela Monchek, SFERTF
Peter Ortner, NOAA/AOML
Terry Rice, Miccosukee Tribe
Rock Salt, DOI
Jay Slack, USFWS
John Volin, Local Government

Administrative Items:

The meeting summary was approved without changes. Page numbers will be added to the summaries and all other handouts that are distributed.

Whiparound:

Loren Mason was happy to announce that the Corps is on schedule after avoiding large cuts in their budgets that could have caused CERP to become 6 months behind.

Peter Ortner was pleased to hear about the Corps' budget success, and similarly their budget was approved for two-years with just a few kinks that are being worked out.

Jay Slack mentioned the Working Group had a meeting last week. The WG will be focusing on Interim Goals and Multi-Species recovery.

Rock Salt announced the DOI Science Plan is being called the DOI Science Strategy to more accurately depict its function in dealing with short and long term management needs. A new draft should be available soon

Ronnie added that the USGS is working with the other DOI agencies on a plan to implement the DOI Science Strategy.

Calvin Arnold apologized for being unable to attend the last meeting. He invited the SCG to meet in Fort Pierce at the USDA building.

John Ogden said RECOVER has put out a CERP adaptive management assessment plan. Ken Lofton will be the coordinator for the implementation process. RECOVER is looking to bring an explanation of adaptive management to the TF/WG.

Joan Browder announced NOAA is looking to start up some of their monitoring projects and added that with his will be some working opportunities in the future of this team.
John Benjamin apologized that Dan Kimball could not be at the SCG meeting; he is meeting with an examiner.

Current State:

TF meeting presentation:

The schedule for developing the plan was discussed at the TF meeting. TF members expressed their desire to have a draft as early as possible to have enough time to review it and to bring substantial comments back to the SCG. The TF discussed the possibility of reviewing the document in sections and of having a special meeting for this purpose. They agreed to correspond over email in the interim.

The TF noted that the update to the Strategic Plan and the Biennial Report has a September deadline as well. They recognized the importance of scheduling enough time to review three significant documents.

The plan:

John introduced Jack Gentile. Jack's resume includes working for the EPA and with the biosphere program at RSMAS. He has been very successful in blending management with science and in dealing with risk management.

Rock introduced David Erne from Booz Allen and Hamilton. His company has worked with scientists from ENP to assist them in coordinating science.

Rock reviewed the slide presentation that was presented last meeting. He explained the TF was troubled by the graph slide because of a misinterpretation of the word projects. They assumed it meant only science projects. The word "projects" will be removed.

Joan Browder suggested adding a glossary to the plan.

Rock explained that the applications section was meant to address management decisions once all the science has been gathered. Bob has drafted a part of this section and provided it for review at this meeting.

The programmatic needs and gaps section will determine what is missing in the programs that are already in place.

Peer Review:

II. B. ii. – Reviewing programmatic science is not the same as what peer review means to scientists.

Clarifying "Peer Review"

- State "programmatic peer review"
- Provide examples of questions the peer review panel would be asked – for example, are the right questions being asked? The team should send Bob questions for inclusion.
- John Ogden will provide peer review information from CERP.
- Ronnie will send Bob the Science Coordination Team Peer Review paper.
- Bob will provide a first cut.

Applications Section:

Peter explained that the team was using an example of an application as how targets and performance measures are used in the adaptive management process.

John explained the process as creating a set of hypotheses, ranking them, and then using the hypotheses woven together in conceptual models as a way of telling what we think we know. This is a process for organizing science. When talking about applications, we are looking at what we know and using the information effectively.

"Applications" was changed to "Management connectivity".

The process should include the elements the Task Force will be using to ensure their deliberations are consistent with this concept, and the best possible science is being utilized. This includes how this group utilizes the process to help the Task Force do this.

A process has been developed through RECOVER that scientists are happy with for meeting the needs of restoration, and the incorporation of qualitative statements made by managers and policy makers.

The plan should also lay out the process of the policy-makers and the managers. John will send out a RECOVER diagram that is similar to the II.B.ii., and one on adaptive management to take its place.

Some aspects work well in the inter-agency teams, but there are some failings in the operations. The SCG could help point out where they are failing in the science.

Jack Gentile:

One of the major issues to deal with is using a strategic approach that is acceptable to the TF that demonstrates that there is a sound scientific process.

To get the conceptual models there was a planning process where the goals were articulated and the drivers and stressors were identified. A lot of the conceptual models are equally rated – the pathways are not ranked. An expert panel is set up to rank pathways and hypotheses as high, medium and low. Identify hot issues and determine what the gaps are.

There are two options:

a) Focus on well-developed, defensible, articulated strategy being applied to one or two examples; if the SCG will take full advantage of RECOVER, use at least one of the conceptual models. An expert panel could be created from conceptual model team leaders. The section would be organized in hypotheses instead of individual models, as the hypotheses would cross boundaries and perhaps be topical in nature.
b) Identify the major gaps throughout the entire system, not for the individual regions.

Time is too limited to run all the options and go through every conceptual model. There should be a strategy with a scientifically sound basis. The SCG must decide if they would like to go with a system level or a module level (one or more conceptual models).

A strategy must be built and explained, and then applied across the board over the course of the next year or two. Within the modules, the drivers in the individual models that apply across the board can also be included.

Jack recommended combining II and III.

The team must determine what scale and what level of complexity their model must be run at. The team agreed the total system model and the Southern Estuary regional model will be used to test the process.

The Plan to Coordinate Science should be a document that describes the process. There will also be an implementation document – with the initial tier being the total system and one regional model. The models would test the strategy process. In September there will be a process that has been field tested on two scales and the remainder can be done over the next year for the September 2005 update. The list generated by running it through the Total System's model will identify what risks and uncertainties must be brought to the Task Force's attention based on a filter of Task Force goals and risk to restoration success.

Determine a process everyone agrees on that can be repeated in the future.
Next Steps:

1) Process that everyone agrees on – group of individuals made up of specialists and conceptual model team members
2) Test the process on the Total System model and the Florida Bay model and determine what the product will be
3) Do we need to refine the process or correct a problem

Plan to coordinate science along the outline the team has laid out, describing the processes.

Process:
Applications: Bob
Quality Assurance: Bob

The Plan is the process, with expertise being the most important part of creating the process. The process will be tested with two models, including the Total System Module. Then another document with examples (pilots) will be created for implementation. The process will be defined but not implemented.

The implementation section should be deliberate, consensus building. Develop a plan with a recommendation on the way to coordinate science.

The RECOVER leadership group will be used to determine some of the gaps.

Process for Section II:
- Lay out the strategy
- Turn the strategy into workshop charge for participants
- Create product
- The uncertainties are ranked
- Move onto Sections III and IV

For Section II B ii 3:
- Determine what are we referring to – what existing groups?
- What is it about them that makes them important to restoration success?
- Provide examples
- Determine if additional expertise is needed

Next Meeting:
The next meeting will be April 19th at FIU to provide a status report, and detailed outline of the strategy. The subgroup will meet with the contractor on March 17th.

The workshops will be planned for May to identify risks.

The team will have July/early August as the target for a potential special TF meeting to review the Plan.